

# Gold Butterfly

## Purpose and Need

The purpose and need for the Gold Butterfly project is to:

- Improve landscape resilience to disturbances (such as insects, diseases, and fire) by modifying forest structure and composition, and fuels.
- Provide timber products and related jobs
- Reduce erosion sources in Willow Creek and Burnt Fork of the Bitterroot River watersheds to improve water quality and bull trout habitat
- Restore or improve key habitats, such as meadows, aspen, and whitebark pine

## Preliminary Proposed Action

Timber harvest, non-commercial thinning, and prescribed fire will be used to achieve the project purpose and need.

The roads in the Gold Butterfly project area provide vehicle access for recreational opportunities and the removal of timber from the forest. The locations of some roads negatively affect, or have the potential to negatively affect, adjacent resources such as bull trout habitat. Roads will be constructed, reconstructed, decommissioned, or maintained to prevent or reduce effects on key habitats. Specific preliminary potential actions in the Gold Butterfly project are:

- Harvest, thin, and prescribe burn units with Douglas-fir beetle, mountain pine beetle, western spruce budworm, and dwarf mistletoe, especially in the wildland urban interface (WUI);
- Harvest, thin, and prescribe burn natural meadows that are being colonized by trees;
- Harvest or thin conifers from declining aspen clones;
- Harvest, thin, or prescribe burn areas with whitebark pine or sensitive plant habitat;
- Close Burnt Fork Rd. at the Gold Creek campground and move the Gold Creek trailhead to the Gold Creek campground;
- Close NFSR 969A at the junction with NFSR 969 (Willow Creek Rd.), move the trailhead to the junction, and develop trailhead facilities;
- Construct specified and temporary roads to support timber removal from the forest;
- Upgrade road conditions on NFSR 364 and 969 with the application of BMP recommendations;
- Build a crossing (temporary/permanent) where NFSR 13131 crosses North Fork of Willow Creek;
- Decommission NFSR 1311 from the junction with NFSR 364 where the road encroaches on Butterfly Creek and construct an alternative route away from the stream; and,
- Decommission or store upland roads in the Willow Creek watershed as decided in the Travel Plan, especially those roads that encroach on streams.